SOME

REFLECTIONS

ON

Mr. *P——n*,

Lecturer at the

BAGNIO in *N——te-Street*.

IN A

DIALOGUE.

Stridor Clangor Tarantantara murmur.
Farnaby's Rhet.

Roſtra Diſertus amat Pueriq; crepundia geſtant.
Quæ Genus.

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Some Reflections, &c.

Meanwell. *Trueman.*

Meanw. WELL met, Neighbour: you ſeem to be in a heat!

Truem. Ay, well I may, I have been at the Bagnio.

Meanw. What Bagnio?

Truem. The Bagnio in *N——te-ſtreet*: I believe it was never ſo heated ſince the Sweating-trade began: and when I was there, I'd have given twice the Money to get out again, that others pay to go in.

Meanw. What was the matter, I beſeech you?

Truem. The matter! why, I have been at a *Lecture* there; but had I been at a Quakers ſilent Meeting in the mean time, 'twould have contributed more to my Eaſe, and as much to my Edification.

M. Fy, Neighbour! methinks you talk very lightly, but pray explain your ſelf.

T. Paſſing by this Afternoon, I remember'd 'twas *Lecture day* there, and fancy'd it might be the celebrated Mr. *P*———*n*'s turn, whom I was very deſirous to hear: Coming near, I was ſoon confirm'd in my Opinion, for there was ſuch a preſs at the Door, that I knew it muſt be ſome *new thing* that draw'd that Crowd together. In ſhort, at the expence of much ſqueezing and thruſting, I got in amongſt the reſt, and found I was not deceiv'd.

M. I wiſh with all my Heart I had been there, for I have heard he is an *Extraordinary Perſon.*

T. He is indeed a moſt *Extraordinary Perſon*, and I wiſh, as you ſay, with all my Heart, that you had been there in my ſtead.

M. Prithee what's the matter with you? it ſeems you are not ſo well pleas'd——

T. You're in the right, I am not: had his Foolery lay another way, I ſhou'd have been well diverted; but when I hear *Religion made a Farce of*, and *Sacred things turn'd into Ridicule*, it provokes my indignation, not my laughter.

M. Sure you don't mean this of Mr. *P*——*n*: Why man! he's one of the moſt

moſt precious *moving* Men amongſt Us.

T. Moving! he moves nothing that I know of, but his Hands and his Head: Yes, perhaps he may move the Ignorant to Tears they know not why, and the more ſenſible to Laughter, with a great deal of reaſon.

M. How vainly you talk, Neighbour! I always took you for a ſober Man, but I begin now to be afraid you are *revolted* to the Enemy's Party; you'd never elſe talk ſo *unbecomingly* of ſo *good a Man*, and ſo *painful a Preacher*.

T. I find, Sir, you are either *miſinform'd* concerning Mr. *P——n*, or elſe you want to be ſet right in your *Judgment*. If you pleaſe, we'll have an hours Diſcourſe, and then, I doubt not, we ſhall be both of a mind as to the Man and his way of Preaching.

M. With all my Heart; if you will, we'll ſtep into *Sue*'s here hard by, 'tis a ſober Houſe, you know, and there we may talk without diſturbance.

T. Ay, provided that *Eternal Wrangler T——g* ben't there; he who talks and writes againſt every-body, and only aims at the Honour of being *anſwer'd*, which he never yet could attain to; for all Parties look upon him as a more troubleſom than dan-

dangerous Enemy; and I am inform'd, that his *Friends* the Quakers would give a Thousand pound that *Keith* and *Lesly* talk'd to as little purpose as he.

M. Well, but now to *our Purpose.* You see the Coast is clear, I desire therefore to know what 'tis you saw or heard could make you take such distaste at Mr. *P—n.*

T. I shall first give you some small account of his Sermon in general, or rather shew you how unaccountable a Sermon 'twas. His Text was, *Colos.* 3. 1, 2. *If ye be then risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your Affections on things above, and not on things on the Earth.* His whole Discourse was Explication, as he call'd it, but 'twas really *tangling* his Text. The Doctrin, he told us, he could not get at; meaning, I suppose, that there was a mighty heap of Rubbish in the way, which must be clear'd off first: at last he made a shift to blunder upon this incomparable Observation: "The things above "(says he) are not Saints and Angels, for "we are not to set our Affections upon "these, [fearing, I imagine, that some of his Auditory might mistake his meaning, and fall stark mad in love with a Saint, or be passionately fond of an Angel] "but "(con-

" (continues he) the Offices of Chriſt: We " are to love them, and ſet our Affections " on them, becauſe they are in Chriſt, and " He is at the right Hand of God. Now if the whole of this be not partly *fooliſh*, and partly *unintelligible*, I'll give up the Cauſe, and be bound to hear another of his Diſcourſes.

M. Take heed, Sir, you know what St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* 1. 18, 19. *For the preaching of the Croſs is to them that periſh fooliſhneſs; but unto us which are ſaved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and will bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent.* Whereby, I ſuppoſe, is meant, that the Doctrin of Chriſt to *Carnal* and *Worldly-wiſe* Men ſeems both *fooliſh* and *unintelligible*.

T. I wiſh, Neighbour, you were as skilful in applying as you are ready at quoting Scripture. The meaning of that Text is, the Croſs of Chriſt, *viz.* that Chriſt, the great Saviour of the World, even God Almighty himſelf, ſhould take upon him the form of a Servant, and ſuffer for our Sins a ſhameful Death upon the Croſs; *this* is that which is *Fooliſhneſs*, an *idle Tale*, to thoſe who periſh in their Unbelief; *this* is that which deſtroys the Wiſdom of the Wiſe,

Wiſe, which the moſt clear-ſighted Philoſopher, by the naked *unarm'd* Eye of his Reaſon, is not able to apprehend. So that this was not written to countenance the *unmeaning* Cant, and *unintelligible* Jargon of an Ignorant Pretender, but to recommend the *plain* ſaving Doctrin of Chriſt crucify'd.

M. I confeſs you have Reaſon. But proceed.

T. After having wander'd a while in the maze of his own indigeſted Thoughts, and crude Notions, about *Adam*'s Fall, deliver'd in Language I can neither remember nor imitate, he at laſt came to tell us, "That Sinners muſt come to Chriſt, and "not to *Moſes*: As for his part, (he ſaid) "that from 8 to 18 years of age he had "mortgag'd his Soul to *Moſes*, but was "then convinc'd that he muſt come to "Chriſt, and lay hold of his Offices. Be"fore that, when he ſinn'd, he pray'd and "repented, and then all was well; when "he ſinn'd again, he pray'd and repented "again, and then all was well again; but "now he had learnt to come to Chriſt: "and you Sinners, (roar'd he out in a diſ"mal obſtreperous voice) you muſt come "to Chriſt.

M. And

M. And is't not true, that Sinners muſt come to Chriſt? for who elſe is able to eaſe them of the burden of their Sins?

T. You ſay right, but it muſt be with *Prayer* and *Repentance*, which he ſeems to intimate are Moſaical and Legal Rites, and of no uſe to a Chriſtian.

M. How do you collect that?

T. Even from his own words, which if they have any meaning at all, it muſt be that: for, if you obſerve, 'twas when he had *mortgag'd his Soul to Moſes*, as he loves to expreſs himſelf, that he pray'd and repented, *&c.* but now ſays he, *I have learnt to come to Chriſt.* That is, I have diſencumber'd my Soul, I am out of the power of Legal Moſaical Rites, I am above Prayer and Repentance: by which he plainly intimates, either that he is ſince he *came to Chriſt*, as he terms it, in a ſtate of perfection, and ſo never ſins at all; or elſe, that a true Chriſtian, when he ſins, need not pray and repent. Both which are as falſe as he is ignorant, and Principles only fit for a Diſciple of Mr. *Dav*——'s.

M. If that be his meaning, he is in the wrong, and ſpake unadviſedly: for 'tis certainly true, that he that *ſaith he has no Sin is a Lyar*; and that in Chriſt's Goſpel, Prayer and Repentance are more

frequently and more warmly recommended to us, than ever they were before; ſo that it's plain he cannot be without Sin; and if he does ſin, Chriſtianity obliges him to Repentance for that Sin, and Prayer for Forgiveneſs, and more Grace for the future. But I rather believe his *meaning was good*, tho' not ſo clearly expreſt.

T. If ſo, can that man be fit to preach the Goſpel who expreſſes himſelf after *ſuch a rate*, as naturally leads his Hearers into ſo groſs an Error? The reſt of his Diſcourſe was an unmethodical, incoherent Jargon, a Lottery of Scripture-words drawn at a venture, without either Order or Deſign: In ſhort, an empty noiſe without a meaning, and to as little purpoſe as the thumping of his Pulpit, which, for the moſt part, ſounded in nonſenſical conſort with his words. And yet I could not without indignation obſerve, that ſuch ſtuff as this, let the poor ignorant Auditory a ſighing and weeping, as if it had really touch'd them with a ſenſe of their Sins.

M. This I ſhould take for a certain and evident ſign, that his Diſcourſe did *ſo affect them*; and that there was more in it, either than you apprehended, or than you'll confeſs.

T. Not

T. Not at all; for thoſe poor deluded Creatures are always thus prevail'd upon, to weep they know not why, and ſigh for they know not what, purely by dint of noiſe and whine. I my ſelf have ſeen 'em do ſo at the Door of a Meeting, where I could not hear one articulate ſound; and, for ought they knew, the good man within, might have been at the ſame time, reading a Play or Proclamation in that affecting tone. And therefore, notwithſtanding this, Mr. *P——n may be, and really is, a bold undertaking Man, without Learning or Parts, an ignorant Inſtructor, and fitter to belabour an Anvil than a Cuſhion.*

M. Methinks, Neighbour, you're too ſharp.

T. If I am ſharp, 'tis becauſe I am zealous for the Intereſt of Religion in general, which muſt needs ſuffer by the management of ſuch Impotent Pretenders; and am aſham'd to ſee any of our Perſwaſion encourage a Man, who will be a laſting ſcandal and reproach to us.

M. If he be ſuch as you repreſent him, whence is it that he is ſo much follow'd and admir'd?

T. Novelty it ſelf pleaſes, and he is a *New Man*; to which add, that he talks *without book*, is very arrogant in his Aſſer-

tions, and was *dubb'd a Preacher* by Mr. *Dav——s.*

M. Are these Qualities sufficient to make a Man popular?

T. What else! If *great Learning, profound Judgment, and a serious, grave Delivery* were now in vogue, you would hardly find so much room where Mr. *M——rs* and Mr. *C——ns* preach, and so little where *N——ble* and *R——ns* amuse the Populace with ridiculous Jingle, instead of good sound Doctrine.

M. As for that matter, Mr. *Co——ns* need not want an Auditory, if he would take the *right method* of getting one: and 'tis his own fault he is not crowded as well as his Neighbours.

T. Why so?

M. Because he deadens his Discourses by reading them, and takes away that lively effect they would have upon Peoples Minds, did he deliver them affectionately, without the use of Notes. And for my part, I must needs own, I had rather hear a plain honest Sermon preach'd without book, than a much better, when read without warmth or concern.

T. You

T. You have now at once ſpoken the Mind of a multitude of People; and ſince 'tis ſo prevailing an Error you lie under, I will do my endeavour to clear this point to you. You adore any one that prates without book, let it be to never ſo little purpoſe; and the Reaſon you generally bring for it is, That a Man can't preach ſo *affectionately* within book as without. But this is not your main darling Reaſon; *that* you pocket up, and only pleaſe your ſelves with, ſeldom daring openly to urge it, as if you were (as indeed you ought to be) aſham'd of it.

M. Pray Sir, under favour, what may that be?

T. Why, Sir, 'tis this; you think that reading a compos'd Diſcourſe is a *ſtinting the Spirit.*

M. To tell you the truth, I do think ſo, and ſhall not eaſily be brought to believe the contrary; for he that binds himſelf up to Words of his own compoſing, deprives himſelf of the free Dictates of the Holy Spirit, and ſeems to prefer his own compoſure, to thoſe Words which God would put into his Mouth.

T. Now all's out; and is this the reaſon you are all ſo much in love with unſtudy'd extemporary Preaching?

M. It

M. It is: nor do I believe that you can give me a better Reaſon to make me out of love with it.

T. That may eaſily be done, when I have ſhewn firſt, that your pretence to the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit in thoſe caſes, is *idle*, *unwarrantable*, and *wicked*; that it proceeds from a mixture of groſs Ignorance and high Preſumption; and that no Man has, or can (according to the general Order and Oeconomy of Chriſtianity) have ſuch Aſſiſtance as you mean.

M. O Sir, I am glad I have at laſt found you out; I was indeed at firſt a little ſtagger'd by ſome of your plauſible Reaſons, but now I know what Judgment ought to be made of all you ſay, ſince you deny the Aſſiſtance afforded by the Holy Spirit to God's Miniſters.

T. I find, Sir, you have got a *charitable* way of miſtaking a Man, before you have heard him out. I did not deny that God's Miniſters were aſſiſted by his Holy Spirit in their Duty; but that he does it in *that manner and meaſure*, you and thoſe of your ſtamp pretend to, I utterly deny; and hope to convince you of the unreaſonableneſs of ſuch an Opinion. You ſay, that preaching a ſtudy'd Diſcourſe

courſe is a *ſtinting the Spirit:* which you explain thus; He that binds himſelf up to Words of his own compoſing, deprives himſelf of the free Dictates of the Holy Spirit, and ſeems to prefer his own Compoſure to thoſe words which God would put into his Mouth. From which, 'tis plain, you believe, that your extemporary Preachers deliver what the Holy Spirit dictates to them, in words which God puts into their Mouths. That is in plain terms, that both the Thoughts and Expreſſions of their Sermons are immediately inſpir'd into 'em. And this is an *idle, unwarrantable*, and *wicked Pretence: Idle*, and *unwarrantable*, becauſe the holy Scripture no where promiſes ſuch an extraordinary Aſſiſtance, to any after the Apoſtles; and *wicked*, becauſe it makes the Holy Spirit the Author of all that Nonſence, which thoſe Men ſo often deliver. 'Tis true, at the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel, Jeſus Chriſt was pleas'd to furniſh his Miniſters with *Extraordinary Gifts*, in a *miraculous manner*, and to confirm their Doctrine by Signs and Wonders; but ſince the eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion in the World, it has been ſupported in an *ordinary courſe of Provi-*

Providence; Men of Parts and Learning being converted and added to the Church, became uſeful Preachers of the Word, by an *orderly improvement* and *exerciſe* of their *Rational Faculties*: By *Meditation* and *Study*, they found out *Matter* and *Method*, for the inſtruction of their Hearers, the convincing of Sinners, and edification of Saints. *Theſe* are the Ends of Preaching, and in theſe, the Aſſiſtance which they receive from God, is a *Bleſſing upon*, and a *furtherance of* their honeſt and painful Endeavours after True Knowledge, and a *diſpoſal* of the Hearts of their Hearers, to receive ſincerely and affectionately, thoſe Goſpel-Truths which they *rationally propoſe* to 'em. *Now* therefore, the Miniſters of the Goſpel are not to expect miraculous Aſſiſtances in their Work, but they ought by ſtudy and diligent application, to prepare their Diſcourſes, and to make uſe of all Rational Helps in order thereto. And certainly *Writing* is the moſt proper way of ſtudy, whether *Reading* be of delivery or not. Now, when the Preacher has thus compos'd ſuch a Diſcourſe as he thinks may be uſeful to the Hearer, 'tis, as to himſelf, all one whether he *read* this Sermon to 'em, or

de-

deliver it memoriter. As to the People, I will allow, that there *may be* a difference between the ſame Sermon read, and deliver'd *memoriter:* but the difference is indeed very ſmall in it ſelf, being chiefly grounded on Prejudice, and only reſpects the Affections, the Judgment being influenc'd *alike by both.* To ballance this Inconvenience, I appeal to your own Obſervation, whether the read Sermons be not almoſt univerſally preferable to the others, except thoſe which are committed entirely to Memory, or deliver'd by ſuch as have an extraordinary command of Language, as Mr. *St———t.*

M. You have talk'd a great deal, but ſtill there's no arguing againſt matter of Fact: We ſee this Man's Miniſtry mightily ſucceeds. The Men you admire preach on in a conſtant road of *Study* and *Reading*, but to very little purpoſe; as appears by the ſmall increaſe of their Churches: but Mr. *P—n* by his Labours has *converted* numbers ſince his coming to Town, as well as in the Country whence he came.

T. I pray God teach those poor People wherein true Conversion lies; I am not for jesting with things in their own nature serious or sacred, but shall give you my Opinion of the matter. *Conversion consists in a change of the Will and Affections*, which are universally vitiated and corrupted; These are by the *Power of God* rectified, and turn'd towards their proper Objects,—previous to which, it is necessary that the *Mind be enlighten'd*, and the Understanding impress'd with the knowledge of the condition of the Soul, together with its Duty. And This is the *principal* End and Design of God, in instituting an Order of Men who should declare *his Word* to the People, that they might *know* the Will of God, and turn from their Sins, and live. And this Work must be perform'd *rationally*, as to *reasonable Creatures*, according to the Examples we find in Holy Writ, where Doctrines are taught clearly, Precepts laid down plainly, attended with Promises for the encouragement of the Obedient, and inforced with Threatnings to the Disobedient. But what's all *this* to our purpose? A Man comes into

into the Pulpit, reads a *plain* Text, confounds the ſence, and then runs out his hour in perfect Cant; Is this to preach the Goſpel? Is this to inſtruct Sinners? This indeed may make *Enthuſiaſts*, but ſurely can never make *true Converts*. And I would to God thoſe Perſons who are to examine theſe *pretended Converts*, would take a ſtrict account of their *Knowledge*, as well as *Experience*. *Light*, as well as *Heat*, accompanies the *Divine Impreſſions*, and where one appears without the other, 'tis to be fear'd that it proceeds only from ſparks of their own kindling: and conſequently that *theſe* poor Creatures are not *really converted*, but only *deluded*, and *amazed*; ſince that which warms the Affections, without informing the Judgment, is only a *falſe glaring Fire*, that may *dazle* and *confound* 'em, but can never *light* and *direct* 'em into the way of *true Godlineſs*. From all this it follows, that the Work of Converſion is to be carried on by *regular and reaſonable means*, by Godly and Pertinent Diſcourſes; and not by a Man's boldly venturing to ſpeak in the Church, provided with

nothing, but Ignorance, and a vain presumptuous Expectation of being inspired. And if so, a Preacher ought to *wait in his Study, for God's Assistance* in forming his Discourses, if he desires they should have their due effect from the Pulpit.

M. I must confess, you have convinc'd me that a Preacher *ought to prepare* his Discourses beforehand; and I know that very few have that Gift of Memory, as to deliver them without reading: from whence follows this Difficulty, that they can't be spoken so *affectionately* as they ought to be, and, by consequence cannot be so strongly impress'd on the Minds of the People. Methinks if this Objection could be answer'd, I should be very well satisfied with what you say.

T. You'll soon answer that Objection to your self, when I have inform'd you what an *affectionate Delivery* really is; and that you have altogether a wrong notion of it. An affectionate Delivery therefore consists in such an *artful management* of the Speech, that every period shall be inforc'd upon the Minds of the Auditory, and as it were command their

their attention: and this is to be done, by giving *each word* in the whole Diſcourſe its *due weight*. When any Doctrine, or Precept, is laid down, it muſt be in a grave, compos'd accent. When Practice is inforced, it muſt be with a decent and manly warmth; whereby we may perceive, that the Preacher is *really engag'd* in the Cauſe he would carry on. And where good ſence is *thus* deliver'd, it is all that's requiſite on the Preacher's part, to make it have its due effect upon the Minds of thoſe that hear it. And as this excludes a *dead, heavy, careleſs ſlubbering* over a Diſcourſe, as if 'twere a School-boy's Part, or an Oath tender'd at the Quarter-Seſſions; ſo it alſo rejects a *noiſy, uneven Tone, ridiculous and laborious Geſtures and Grimaces*; all that intolerable Medley of *bellowing, ſtretching, thumping, ſtaring, whining, ſtamping, gaping*, and *weeping*; in ſhort, all that *magnificent exerciſe* of the *Hands*, the *Feet*, the *Head*, the *Bible*, the *Cuſhion*, and the *Lungs*, which thoſe *precious affectionate Preachers* generally furniſh out their *Farce* with.

M. By what you have ſaid, Neighbour, you ſeem to be againſt all *Elevation* of the *Voice* upon occaſion, and all *Action*; both which ſometimes add a *Grace* and *Weight* to what is deliver'd.

T. You miſtake me Sir, I'm not againſt ſo much of both, as may be *graceful* and *convenient*; and this is comprehended in that part of my deſcription which ſays, that where *Practice is to be inforc'd*, it muſt be with a *decent* and *manly warmth*, &c. This leaves a *Liberty* to the *Judicious* Preacher to uſe Both, as he ſees occaſion, but it muſt be diſcreetly and ſparingly.

M. If therefore a *Liberty* is left in theſe, at the *diſcretion* of the Miniſter, why may not Mr. *P——n* uſe that *Liberty*?

T. For the very ſame reaſon that a *Mad-man* has not *his Liberty* to walk about Streets, becauſe he cannot uſe it as other reaſonable Men do: for he can't ſtretch out his Hand, but he ſeems to be knocking down an Ox; nor move his Head, but he looks as if he were throwing it among his Congregation.

tion. To convince you how far he ought to be truſted with Action, I'll tell you what I ſaw him do. He told his Auditors, that "as every blow *Noah* "ſtruck in building the Ark was Warning to that Age, ſo every blow he "ſtruck on his Bible (thump) and "every blow he ſtruck on his Pulpit (thump) was a Warning to Sinners to repent. Now, if he can't move his *Hands* in the Pulpit without endangering his Knuckles, he certainly ought to have 'em tied behind him. And by this time, I hope, you perceive what an Affectionate Delivery is, and what 'tis not; and from thence may eaſily of your ſelf conclude, that a Man may *read as affectionately* as he can repeat; ſince 'tis poſſible for him to read ſo, as to give every word its due *emphaſis* and *weight*.

M. I am convinc'd that an Affectionate Delivery does not conſiſt in *abundance* of Noiſe and Action, but in a grave Geſture, and a due Accent; and that therefore it is not only allowable, but *generally* moſt convenient, that the Preacher read his Diſcourſes. But I remember you charg'd Mr. *P——n* with being

being *arrogant in his Assertions*; I don't very well know what you mean by it, or in what respect you urge it upon him as a Fault.

T. A Man is *arrogant*, when he boldly asserts any thing upon his *own Authority*, without due proof: And this is a greater Fault in a Divine, than in any other Person, because the Subjects he treats on are of greater moment and concern than any other; and the Errors deliver'd by him, most fatal to his Hearers, if receiv'd. Besides, that in Religion every Man being to believe and act for himself, the *clearest Conviction* from the *best Authority*, and *plainest Reason*, is necessary in it self, and justly expected by all.

M. Certainly a Preacher, who is God's Ambassador, ought to deliver his Message *boldly*, and with Authority. And we find St. *Paul*, *Ephes.* VI. 19, 20. entreats the *Ephesians*, That together with their Prayers for themselves, they would put up Supplications to GOD upon his account, *that a Door of Utterance might be given unto him, that so he might open his mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel*; *for which*

which he was an Ambaſſador in Bonds, that therein he might ſpeak boldly, as he ought to ſpeak.

T. Right Sir, and no doubt, but *with ſubmiſſion to better Judgments*, and *by your leave Sir*, are Expreſſions altogether unbecoming the Pulpit: For a Man ought to ſpeak nothing there, but what he can deliver *boldly*, and with *Authority*, but that Authority is not his own. The Apoſtle ſtiles himſelf an *Ambaſſador*; that is, one who brings a Meſſage from another, and muſt produce his *Credentials* for what he ſays. And whilſt the Preacher ſpeaks the Words of GOD, or what is deduced from, and agreeable to them, his Diſcourſe ought to be receiv'd as an *Embaſſy* from the *Moſt High:* that is, with *Humility*, *Affection*, and *Reverence*. But any deviation from his Commiſſion, is to be rejected with diſdain. And *thus* we find that great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* you mention'd, always delivering himſelf. With the *Heathen* he argues from *Rational* Principles, and ſometimes illuſtrates his matter by Quotations from their own Authors. To

the *Jews* he proves the Truth of the Christian Religion, from the Writings of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. To those already *Discipled*, he urges the *Authority of Christ*, and the immediate Dictates of the Holy Spirit; and all this in a *manly Air*, and with a *becoming boldness*, as God's Ambassador, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ. But what's this to Mr. *P——n?* He comes boldly into the Pulpit, tells his Auditors upon his *own Knowledge* and *Experience*, That Christians need not Repent of their Sins.

M. But you granted that he might *mean* otherwise, tho' his Words seem'd to carry that sence.

T. 'Tis all one for that, a Man is guilty of the highest Arrogance, when he delivers a Ly with the Face of Authority, whether he knows it to be so or no: for as I told you before, a Preacher's Authority only reaches, to the delivery of what *he knows to be Truth*. Is't not the highest Impudence in the World, for a Man, when his Brains are upon an unaccountable Ramble, to impose whatever he meets in his way, be it never so false or foolish,

liſh, upon his Auditory, as if 'twere a Divine Truth? to turn *his Nonſence* into an Article of Faith, and ſet his own idle Dreams in the ſame Light, and upon the level with the Word of God? Muſt what he prates to the *unedifying* of his Hearers, and the *ſetting 'em back* in the knowledge of their Duty, be urg'd with as much weight as the living Oracles of GOD? By what Authority does he tell us, That the Offices of Chriſt are thoſe things above, which we muſt ſet our Affections on? The *true* Character of a Miniſter of Chriſt could not bear him out in ſuch a *bold, unmeaning* Aſſertion; much leſs the *uſurp'd* one, to which he has no more Title than he has to Sence or Learning. This is the Arrogance with which Mr. *P——n* is overſtock'd, and which *unqualifies* him for a Miniſter of the Goſpel, as much as his Ignorance, with which he is no leſs abundantly furniſh'd.

M. I can't help taking notice, Neighbour, that in all you have ſaid you ſeem to inſiſt too much upon *Learning*, as if that were a neceſſary Qualification for a Miniſter.

T. Why what think you of it?

M. Truly I think 'tis ſo far from being a neceſſary Qualification, that I believe it's a *vain human Acquiſition*, ſerving only to Worldly Ends, and very frequently diſcountenanc'd in Scripture.

T. A very worthy Opinion you have of it I find. And pray, Sir, what may be the *cogent* Reaſons that induce you to believe this? for I always took it for *quite another thing*, and ſhould have been as apt to believe that Piety was promoted in the Play-houſe, as that Learning was diſcountenanc'd in the Scripture.

M. Neighbour, you have been ſo kind as to ſet me right in ſome Particulars that I miſapprehended, and therefore I think my ſelf bound in gratitude to *inform you in my turn.* You muſt know then that Learning's *a vain thing*, becauſe it does not promote, but rather hinder, the knowledge of thoſe things that Chriſtianity teaches us; it ſerves only to worldly ends, becauſe thoſe that poſſeſs it aim at nothing but Reputation or Preferment; and that it's frequently diſcountenanc'd in Scripture, I

can

can ſhew you, by producing my Authority from thence.

T. Alas, poor Learning! if this be prov'd, there's no more to be ſaid, thou'rt gone to all intents and purpoſes: all Books are Libels in a Chriſtian Government, and to be burnt by the hands of the common Hangman: all Languages talk Treaſon, and all Arts and Sciences are in actual Rebellion. This is a *heavy Charge*, Neighbour: but won't it be worth our while to ſee whether it can be made out, before we give up the Cauſe? I would therefore deſire to know why you think that Learning does not promote, but rather hinder, the knowledge of thoſe things which Chriſtianity teaches us?

M. 'Tis plain from Experience. Is't not Learning that contrives and ſupports all Hereſies? Don't your Deiſts, Atheiſts, Socinians, and all that ſwarm of wicked *Unbelievers* and *Misbelievers* draw all their Arguments from the Principles of Philoſophy, and the very Springs of Nature, as they call it? Or was there ever any falſe Opinion ſtarted in the World, which had not Lear-

Learning for its *ſource*, and for its *defence*? From hence 'tis plain, that Learning hinders Chriſtian Knowledge, ſince it promotes, and ſupports, all the Atheiſm and Hereſy in the World.

T. Neighbour, you've ſaid juſt as much againſt Learning, as if you'd ſaid nothing at all; for the very ſame Argument may be turn'd againſt the *Word of God it ſelf*: Have not all the Hereticks that ever appear'd in the Church, pretended to draw their Opinions and Follies from thence? Don't they ſupport their falſe Hypotheſes by Texts of Scripture?

M. But thoſe Texts they *miſapply*; and either do not, or will *not underſtand aright*.

T. Now, Neighbour, you have anſwer'd your own Argument; for 'tis the *miſapplication* of *Learning*, and the *not underſtanding*, or the *perverting*, that Philoſophy they pretend to, that's the Foundation of all Errors. And as the true and genuine Interpretation of the Scriptures, confutes their Arguments drawn from thence; ſo by a right uſe of Learning and Philoſophy, you turn their Artillery againſt themſelves; and beat

beat them at the Weapons they call their Own, though they miſtake their Uſe.

M. What! would you make me believe that Learning is not a Prejudice to Chriſtianity? Don't St. *Paul* himſelf ſay, 1 *Cor.* 18. 1. that *Knowledge puffeth up?* If therefore Knowledge puffeth up, does it not hinder a Chriſtian from learning his Duty, ſince Pride is the greateſt Enemy to Inſtruction?

T. Truly, Sir, you have brought a Text here, that ſupports your Cauſe *mainly well.* You might have turn'd back in your Bible, and have quoted the firſt Verſe in it to as much purpoſe.

M. Your Servant Sir! I have no more to ſay to you! I find you're upon a merry pin. If you'd laugh, find ſomebody elſe ———

T. But why in ſuch a Paſſion, Neighbour?

M. Are not you the moſt provoking Man in the World? What you can't anſwer, you laugh at.

T. Well,

T. Well Sir, ſit down again, and I'll try to anſwer you, if you'll hear me. You muſt know then, that by this *Knowledge that puffeth up*, the Apoſtle no more intends *Learning* than he does the Black Art, or the ſeven deadly Sins. But St. *Paul* is here diſcourſing of *Chriſtian Liberty*, that is, the Priviledge Chriſtians have in matters indifferent, to take their choice of doing or not doing them, as they ſhould think fit. And 'tis the Knowledge of *this Chriſtian Liberty* that, as he ſays, *puffeth up*; that is, 'tis apt ſometimes to make a Man *deſpiſe*, and lord it over his weak Brother, who perhaps is ſcrupulous where he need not be ſo.

M. But I have another Text which you cannot evade, and that's *Coloſſ.* II. 8. *Beware leaſt any man ſpoil you thro' Philoſophy and vain deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Chriſt.* This ſhews that Learning is diſcountenanc'd in Scripture.

T. Really, Sir, you have made a home thruſt now, but you are wide yet; Learning may live ſtill without the

the help of a Chyrurgeon, for any hurt you have done. The Philoſophy, and vain Deceit he mentions here, is not *Learning in general*, but ſome *particular Traditions* of Men, about *worſhipping of Angels, New Moons, and Sabbaths*, &c. as you will ſee, if you turn your Eyes forward to the 16th Verſe, and ſo on to the end of the Chapter. And let me, Neighbour, once for all, give you this Advice, never to make uſe of a Text in Scripture to prove any thing, till you know, by what goes before and after it, whether 'twill be to your purpoſe.

M. Well, for all this, I have an Argument againſt *Learning*, which does not depend upon any particular place in the Holy Scripture, but upon our Saviour's own Practiſe; and 'tis this: Our Saviour knowing that Men of Learning were proud, and unteachable, choſe his own Diſciples, who after him were to convert the whole World, out of the *ignorant and unlearned People*: which plainly ſhews, that he thought Learning, to be a hindrance to that Knowledge, which he was bringing into the World.

7. The Learned Men in his Time, were generally *Heads*, or *violent Abettors*, of ſeveral *Sects*, and *Opinions*, as *Phariſees*, *Sadducees*, &c. and therefore when our Saviour appear'd, with a deſign to *ſet up a new Opinion*, and make himſelf *Head of a new Sect*, 'tis no Wonder that they who were ſo prejudic'd, and intereſted before, in their own Parties, refus'd to come over to his: and that being Doctors *already* themſelves, they ſhould think it ſcorn to ſit again at a Teacher's Feet, and become Diſciples anew: This was *one reaſon*, why not many Wiſe were called. The Argument you make uſe of therefore, proves thus much; That our Saviour did indeed find the Learned Men at the time of his coming, a *perverſe*, *overweening*, *unteachable Generation*; becauſe of their Pre-ingagements, and Intereſts, and therefore rejected them, and choſe *unlearned Men* for his Diſciples. But then, when he left them, he ſent his Holy Spirit upon 'em, to ſupply *that Defect* with a power of ſpeaking in all Tongues, and upon all Occaſions with the Wiſdom of God; and their *want of Learning* was abun-

abundantly made up by Knowledge from above. So that what you ſay, inſtead of making againſt Learning, proves directly *for it*; ſince GOD himſelf has approv'd the Convenience of it, by giving it *miraculouſly* to thoſe who had it not, and who otherwiſe could never have been ſo fit Inſtruments, of propagating his Holy Word.

M. I don't apprehend, Neighbour, that what you ſaid laſt is a fair Anſwer; for 'tis *Human Learning* we are diſputing about, and you tell me the Apoſtles were inſpir'd with *Divine Learning*. Now I grant you, that it would be an abſurd thing, to ſuppoſe that what God himſelf teaches, ſhould be condemn'd in his Word. But my Objection was againſt Man's Learning.

T. This is not very material, for what I have ſaid, ſhews the *manifeſt uſe* of Learning in the Miniſtry; and ſince God has not thought fit to continue his Inſpiration in the Church, human acquir'd Learning attain'd for the *ſame End*, and applied to the *ſame Uſes*, that inſpir'd Learning was ſubſervient to, muſt by the ſame Argument be

allow'd. Thus I have anſwer'd two main Articles of your Charge againſt Learning: it's being a hindrance to the Knowledge of what Chriſtianity teaches; and its being frequently diſcountenanc'd in Scripture. Your other Aſſertion, That thoſe who profeſs it aim at nothing but Preferment or Reputation; is falſe, in as many Inſtances as there are Men of Godlineſs, and Learning. And as for thoſe who apply it to thoſe unjuſtifiable Ends, they abuſe it, and pervert a good thing to ill purpoſes.

M. Well then, ſuppoſing the lawfulneſs of Learning in a Miniſter, where's the *Neceſſity* of it?

T. I can't ſay there's *ſuch* a *Neceſſity* for Learning in a Miniſter, that he can't be *capable* of that *Character* without it. But 'tis ſo *highly convenient*, that 'tis pity there ſhould be any Miniſter *unqualified* that way.

M. In what does this great Uſefulneſs of Learning conſiſt? for I muſt confeſs, that I can't yet apprehend it.

T. It

T. It consists in this, that 'tis a great help to the Minister, tow'rds the due instruction of his Congregation, and tow'rds the maintaining his Religion against all Opposers.

M. Make me understand in what manner 'tis a help to him, tow'rd the due instruction of his Congregation.

T. To the *due instruction* of a Congregation is requir'd, that the Preacher's Discourse be *pertinent throughout* to his Subject; that his *Expressions* be *proper*, *clear*, and *intelligible*; that his *Method* be *distinct*, and without *Confusion*; in short, that what he says be adapted to the Memory, and worth remembring. In all these Articles, Learning is very useful, and *almost* necessary; for by it he treasures up a Stock of Thoughts, and Notions, which he can draw out upon all Occasions, and to all Uses; and this enables him to talk *pertinently* upon all Subjects; His Knowledge is inlarg'd, and He has a greater compass of Understanding: He has Thoughts, and Words at command, and never wants somewhat to say, suitable to any Occasion.

ſion. On the contrary, for want of Learning, the Preacher's Soul is *cramp'd into a narrow compaſs*, his Thoughts are confin'd, and he's forc'd to ſay the ſame thing over, and over again: Let his Subject be what it will, hear one of his Sermons, and you have his *whole Body of Divinity* at once. If he preaches from *Geneſis* to the *Revelations*; he never tells you any thing, but that you muſt *come to Chriſt*; unleſs perhaps, for your diverſion, he lets you know, "that as thick as you ſtand, you "will make room enough for the "Word of GOD, to fall down on "the Ground between you. In ſhort, whenever he mounts the Pulpit, his whole Diſcourſe is *at beſt* but Truth *impertinently* deliver'd; He muſt ſay ſomewhat, but is ignorant of what ought to be ſaid. And, as Learning *enlarges* the Mind, and makes it capable of exerciſing it ſelf pertinently upon any Subject; ſo it poliſhes the Language, and teaches a Man to *Expreſs* properly, and congruouſly, what he *thinks* pertinently: ſo that he ſeldom delivers his Mind in unintelligible Phraſes;

Phraſes; he never confounds his Auditory with Jargon, and Cant; nor amuſes 'em with "ſetting their Affe-"ctions on the Offices of Chriſt. By Learning alſo He gets the Art of *Methodizing* a Diſcourſe, his Thoughts and Words are well *diſciplin'd*, and regulated; and by their connexion, and dependance upon one another, they are retain'd more eaſily by their Hearers. When on the contrary, a diſorderly heap of confuſed Words, and Notions, paſs by like a Crowd, in which no one Perſon is particularly taken notice of. Thus *Learning* is uſeful to a Preacher, in making his whole *Diſcourſe pertinent*, his *Expreſſion clear*, and his *Method diſtinct*; and by conſequence adapts what he ſays to the Memory of his Hearers, and makes it worth remembring. Whilſt your Unlearned Preacher *ſtarves* the Souls of the poor gaping Auditory, with Impertinence ill expreſs'd. The principal Obſervations he makes to 'em, are ſuch as this: "*Joſeph* is a "Type of Jeſus; for when he liv'd "with his Father *Jacob*, his Name "was *Joſeph*. When his Brethren "ſold

" ſold him to the *Midianites*, his Name " was *Joſeph*. When the *Midianites* " ſold him to *Potiphar*, his Name was " *Joſeph*. When *Potiphar* caſt him in- " to Priſon, his Name was *Joſeph*: " And when *Pharaoh* exalted him to " be Lord of all *Egypt*, his Name was " JOSEPH STILL. Thus Jeſus was " named by the Angel Jeſus. Whilſt " He liv'd with his Mother *Mary*, " his Name was Jeſus. When he was " baptiz'd of *John*, his Name was Jeſus. " When he preacht the Goſpel, his Name " was Jeſus. When he was ſcourg'd " by the *Jews*, his Name was Jeſus. " When he was crucified upon the " Croſs, his Name was Jeſus. When " he aroſe from the Dead, his Name " was Jeſus. And now he is in Heaven, " his Name is JESUS STILL. This is a more Ridiculous Obſervation, and much to the ſame purpoſe with his, who told his Congregation, that SELAH in the Old Teſtament, was a Type of AMEN in the New. A Man of Learning would never tell you, That * the three Ingredients of Hell-Fire, are, 1ſt,

* In a Sermon of Mr. *H*——*t*'s.

" 1*ſt*, Heat without Light. 2*dly*, Eter-
" nity. 3*dly*, Unquenchableneſs. If you were to give your Maid the Ingredients of a Cowſlip-Pudding, d'ye think it would not ſtartle her, to hear you, inſtead of naming Eggs, Bread, *&c.* tell her, there muſt be yellowneſs, roundneſs, and unſquareneſs in it?

M. Perhaps Learning *may* contribute ſomething to the better inſtructing the People; But how will you make out your other Aſſertion, that it contributes to the Defence of Religion? I have been told, that as we draw the whole of our Faith and Practiſe out of *Scripture*, ſo we ought to recurr *thither* for the ſupport and defence of 'em. And this a Man may do without Learning, ſince we have the Scriptures in our Mother Tongue.

T. This, if true, holds in this caſe only; where you are to diſpute with one, that *owns* the Scripture for the Principle of our Faith, and Practice; and likewiſe *acquieſces* in the preſent Interpretation we have of it. But what will you do, when you come to talk

with a cunning Heretick, that *denies both or either of theſe?* How will you defend the Scripture it ſelf, or its Interpretation? How will you prove the Canon of it, or convince Him of the falſe Gloſſes He makes? An unlearned Man muſt here *give up* the Cauſe of Religion; ſince He can't prove, both, that the Scriptures are the true and perfect Rule of it; and that we have a full and genuine Collection of the Scriptures. And now to apply this to Mr. *P——n.* Do you think *He* can be capable of *thus* defending his Religion, when his Friends at *J——, &c. H——* ſay, he cannot read Written hand? And I believe there may be others of his Sett, and Diſciples of *D——s*, who can't read what is printed.

M. Pray what is this Mr. *D——s?*

T. 'Twill be hard to give you *One Character* of him; but by what I have heard, he is in *Diſcipline an Independant*, in *Principle an Antinomian*, and in *truth an Enthuſiaſt.* His Friends unhappily beſtow'd a ſmattering of Learning upon him, which he has, as unhappily

happily employ'd, in confounding his own Head, and diſturbing other Peoples. *By Profeſſion* He's a *Religion-mender* now, having left that of a Pedant; and it would have been better for true Religion, had he been a *Bellows-mender*. By his new fangled Notions, He has ſeduc'd a number of Ignorant People, to a pretended Worſhip, where, as ſoon as They are met together, they fall a *barking*, *howling*, *foaming*, *ſqueeling*, *hooting*, *dancing*, and *playing Monkey Tricks*, and drunk with Enthuſiaſm, they act they know not what: but, like the old Diſciples of *Bacchus*, *run madding about* in a thouſand ridiculous poſtures. This is the Man who has ſent us Theſe *precious Lights* into the Church; ſuch as Mr. P——*n*, Mr. *N*——*le*, and many others that might be named, the natural Fruit of ſo hopeful a Tree: Theſe, tho' They can't bewitch People like their Maſter, as being belike not very *apt Scholars*; yet no leſs miſlead them from the true Paths of Knowledge; and ſcatter their pernicious Principles abroad like the *Ene-*

my's Tares; ſupplying their want of Sence by Noiſe, and want of Judgment by Impudence.

M. And yet you own Mr. *D——s* has Learning; and I have heard that Mr. *N—le* is a Scholar.

T. They have a *left-handed Learning*, that always flies askew, and miſſes the Mark; a *Twilight* of Knowledge, by which they can ſee nothing diſtinctly. Theſe ſort of Men have a *Principle* of Darkneſs in 'em; whence it proceeds I know not, whether from their Pride, or from ſome ſupernatural Deluſion, that the cleareſt Rays of Learning can't pierce ſo far, as to enlighten their Minds, but only dazle and confound 'em. Even a Man without Learning may ſee the plain meaning of this Text, *Eccleſ.* X. 20. *Curſe not the King, no not in thy thought; and curſe not the Rich in thy Bedchamber: for a Bird of the air ſhall carry the Voice, and that which hath Wings ſhall tell the matter.* But Mr. *D——s* his Learning, I remember, was pleas'd to confound the Text by this explication. " The King, and the Rich Man,

" Man, is Chriſt. The Bedchamber is " the Heart. The Bird of the Air, " and that which hath Wings, is " God's Omniſcience. And Curſing " is unbelieving. So that all comes " to this; Disbelieve not Chriſt in " thy Heart, for God's Omniſcience " can *tell* it. And what but Mr. *N*———*le*'s Learning would cite that Awful Text, as he call'd it, " *Jacob* " have I loved, but *Eſau* have I hated; to prove, that all who dye in Infancy are not ſaved.

M. Well Neighbour, I'll conſider of what you've ſaid; for I begin to think, *I have been in the wrong* all this while. And I believe that I may find out better Preachers, among our People, than thoſe I have hitherto follow'd.

T. You may. And if you'll take my Judgment along with you, for *depth of Judgment*, and *weighty Inſtruction*, hear Mr. *C*———*ns*. For *plain Truth*, and *familiar Perſwaſion*, Mr. *M*——*rs*. For *good Manly Sence dreſs'd in the Ornaments of Juſt Rhetorick*,

torick, Mr. *H——on*, and Mr. *P——tt*. And you'll ſoon learn to deſpiſe the Herd of *little Pretenders*, ſo much admir'd by the ignorant Vulgar.

FINIS.

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